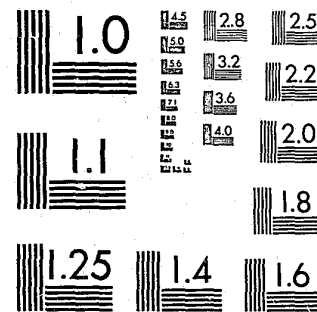


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National Institute of Justice  
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COST EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL JAILS

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Bureau of Criminal Justice Assistance

February 1982

U.S. Department of Justice  
National Institute of Justice

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Criminal Justice Assistance (BCJA) staff was directed by the Florida Council on Criminal Justice (FCCJ), at the January 14, 1982 meeting, to begin an assessment of the operation of the county jails under the 1981 Rules of the Department of Corrections (DOC) for County and Municipal Detention Facilities (Chapter 33-8, Florida Administrative Code). The Council directed staff to focus the initial assessment on the financial ability or inability of small jail facilities to operate in a cost effective manner. The staff has utilized the new DOC jail standards to project the costs associated with bringing small county jails into compliance with minimum constitutional standards.

The intent of this report is to present to the Executive Committee some initial findings based upon information gathered in research efforts to date. The Second-Judicial Circuit was selected as the sample region to collect data. This Circuit was selected because it consists of predominantly small, rural counties. While it is believed that the data collected from the Second Judicial Circuit should be generally representative of the type of data which exists in other similar regions throughout the state, it should be noted there are a multitude of variables which can impact on counties to differing degrees. Therefore, findings based on data collected in the Second Circuit should be viewed as merely an example of findings which could be expected in similar regions.

## CONCLUSIONS

The following represents the conclusions drawn from this research effort.

- Most county jails, and in particular small county jails, do not appear to be operating in a cost effective manner under the existing county jail standards.
- The most serious problems small counties are facing are inadequate staff, deteriorating facilities and insufficient funds to properly operate the jails.
- The most serious problem facing larger jails appears to be jail overcrowding.
- The most cost effective jails are those with high ratios of inmates to staff and those with inmate populations at or near capacity.
- Most small jails have very low inmate/staff ratios and do not operate near their maximum inmate capacity. Thus, most small jails are not cost effective.
- Most of the small county jails are located in northern Florida or the Panhandle.
- The sheriffs of the Second Judicial Circuit perceived the current and future problems associated with bringing their jails into compliance with existing standards to be quite serious and burdensome.
- All sheriffs staff talked to expressed a strong willingness and desire to explore alternative solutions to their jail problems.

- Among the general alternatives identified in this report, the jail regionalization concept appears to hold the greatest potential for alleviating the problems confronting county jails.
- Even with a regional jail concept, all counties will at least have to maintain a short term local lock-up capability.
- Regionalization will only be cost effective if short term county lock-ups are exempted from many of the current jail standards.
- Unless some alternatives are explored and implemented, it appears that many counties-particularly small counties, are headed for inevitable and significant legal conflicts with the State.
- Further research, evaluation and planning is needed to answer many of the remaining questions surrounding the county jail issue and to explore the feasibility of the various options available to address the identified problems. Specific areas needing further study include:
  - Identifying areas of the state which are experiencing significant problems with their county jail operation.
  - Exploring the "reasonable proximity" issue which includes reasonable inmate access to legal counsel, family and visitors.
  - Determining the degree to which local lock-ups must comply with existing jail standards.

- Exploring the pros and cons of the various policy decisions relating to county jails such as the increased utilization of pretrial release alternatives and the incarceration of misdemeanants, etc.
- Identifying specific cost variables associated with the regionalization concept.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Criminal Justice Assistance (BCJA) staff was directed by the Florida Council on Criminal Justice (FCCJ), at the January 14, 1982 meeting, to begin an assessment of the operation of the county jails under the 1981 Rules of the Department of Corrections (DOC) for County and Municipal Detention Facilities (Chapter 33-8, Florida Administrative Code). The Council directed staff to focus the initial assessment on the financial ability or inability of small jail facilities to operate in a cost effective manner. The staff has utilized the new DOC jail standards to project the costs associated with bringing small county jails into compliance with minimum constitutional standards.

The intent of this report is to present to the Executive Committee some initial findings based upon information gathered in research efforts to date. This report contains operational and budget profiles of six county jails. Additionally, the report indicates, based on available data, the relative current and projected cost effectiveness of the six county jail operations based upon the existing jail standards.

Following a discussion of the current and projected operational costs of the six counties is a general list of possible alternatives which may warrant further scrutiny. During the course of this research, a number of significant issues have been identified which could and should be addressed to yield a more comprehensive and accurate picture of the status of and problems confronting county jail facilities.

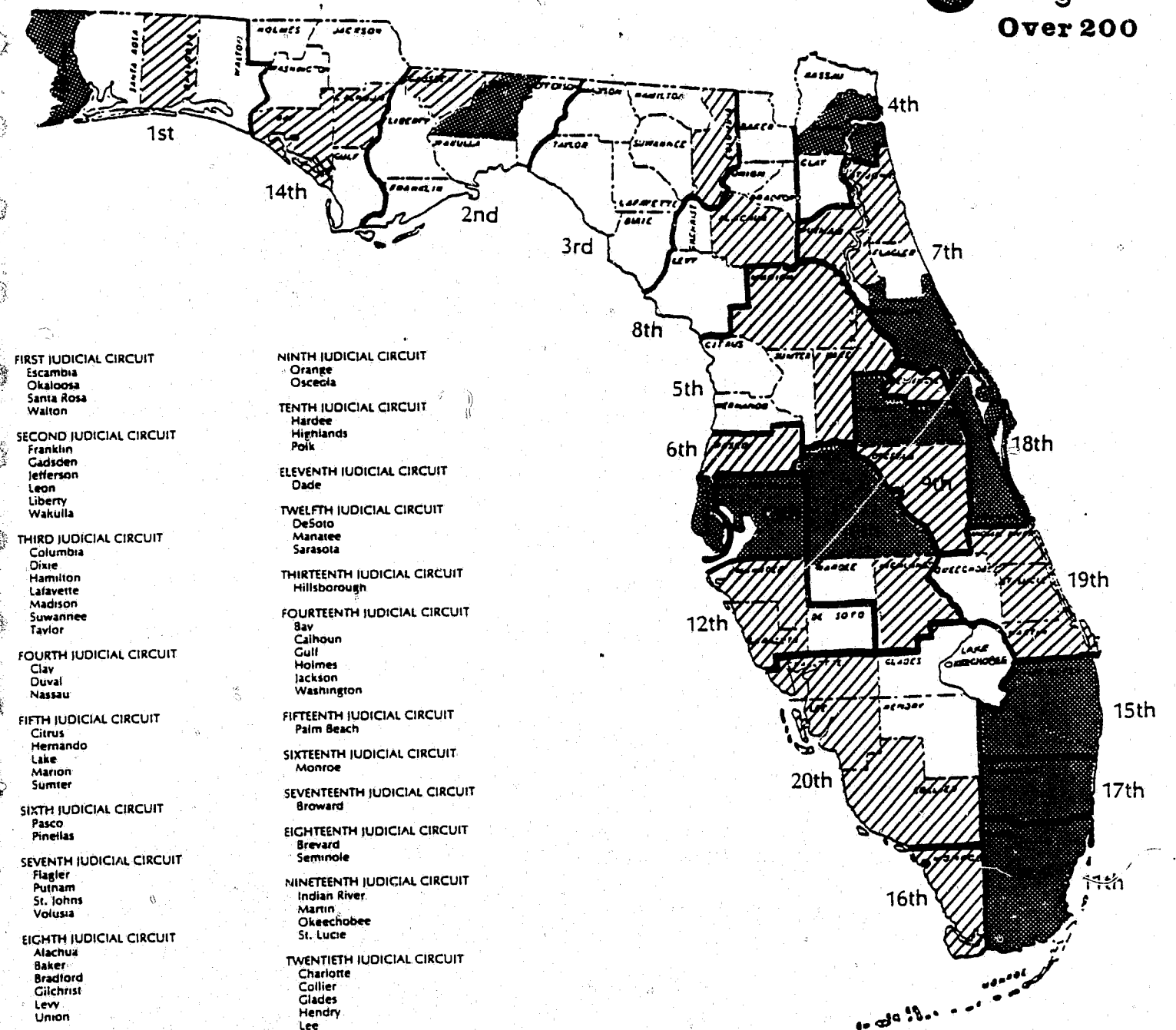
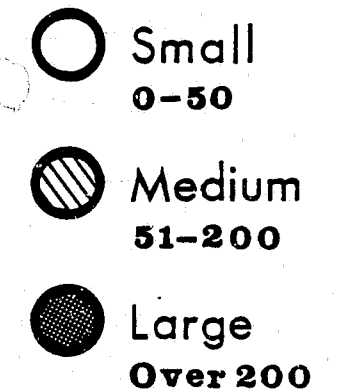
## II. METHODOLOGY

In order to conduct this preliminary assessment, staff felt it was important to select for analysis, a multi-county region which is comprised of predominantly small, rural counties. The Second Judicial Circuit consisting of Leon, Gadsden, Wakulla, Jefferson, Franklin and Liberty counties was selected as the sample region. Within this Circuit there are four small jails, one medium size jail and one large jail (see Figure 1 for jail size breakdowns and criteria).

Jail data collected from the Second Judicial Circuit should be generally representative of the type of data which exists in other rural and predominantly small county regions throughout the state. However, it should be noted there are a multitude of variables which can impact on counties to differing degrees. Such variables include: existing facilities, access to adequate facilities, geography, county revenue structure, and political considerations. Therefore, data collected from the Second Circuit should be viewed as merely an example of jail data likely to be found in other similar jurisdictions. In order to best assess the operation of county jails, each region needs to be examined separately.

# Size of County Jails

(Based on Average Daily Population)



The data used for this assessment were primarily operational and budgetary in nature and were collected during on-site visitations and interviews with county sheriffs and/or jail administrators within the Second Judicial Circuit. These data were supplemented with information contained in DOC Jail Inspection Reports and from the recent BCJA report A Study of Current Status of Florida's County Jails. Additionally, staff consulted with various Federal, state and local jail authorities.

The data collected were compiled and used to develop an operational and budgetary profile of the six county jails in the sample. Then, after careful analysis of the existing DOC jail rules, county jail budget projections were developed for each county based upon their degree of non-compliance with currently enforced jail standards. It should be noted that these budget projections were developed by calculating the operational costs each county would incur if its jail was brought up to minimum compliance with DOC standards. The projected budget figures do not include any renovation or construction costs or any other non-identifiable operational costs.

### III. FINDINGS

The information presented below is divided into two basic sections - operational data and budget data. The budget data are

further broken down into current and projected sections although Tables 5 and 6 contain all budget information.

It should be noted when reviewing jail data from the Second Judicial Circuit, that Leon and to a lesser extent Gadsden Counties stand out. These counties operate jails which are substantially larger than the other four counties in the Circuit and consequently have certain types or degrees of problems that small counties do not appear to have. Therefore, Tables 4 and 6 are presented to contrast characteristics of the Leon County jail with the rest of the Circuit.

#### A. Operational Data

The information contained in Table 1 shows that the six county jail facilities range in age from 9 to 46 years with the average being 24 years. There are a total of 467 jail beds in the Circuit with the Leon County jail accounting for 282 (60%) of these. However, the DOC has given each jail a maximum capacity rating which totals 367 for the entire Circuit.

The average daily inmate population in the Circuit is 327 with Leon County accounting for nearly 70% (226) of this number. Only Leon, Gadsden and Franklin are experiencing any substantial problems with staying under the DOC factored capacity.



TABLE 1

JAIL PROFILE AND INMATE COMPOSITION

	LEON	GADSDEN	WAKULLA	JEFFERSON	FRANKLIN	LIBERTY	2nd JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
I. Age of Jail Facility	17 yrs.	46 yrs.	9 yrs.	12 yrs.	33 yrs.	26 yrs.	24 yrs.
II. Size of Facility*	Large	Medium	Small	Small	Small	Small	
III. Total Bed Space	282	102	24	24	17	18	467
IV. Total Average Daily Population	226	65	12	10	11	3	327
A. Males and Percent of Total	207 (92%)	63 (97%)	12 (100%)	10 (100%)	10 (91%)	3 (100%)	305 (93%)
B. Females " " "	19 (8%)	2 (3%)	0 ---	0 ---	1 (9%)	0 ---	22 (7%)
C. Juveniles " " "	6 (3%)	2 (3%)	0 ---	0 ---	0 ---	0 ---	8 (2%)
D. Felons " " "	120 (53%)	54 (83%)	9 (75%)	6 (60%)	9 (82%)	2 (67%)	200 (61%)
E. Misdemeanants " " "	106 (47%)	11 (17%)	3 (25%)	4 (40%)	2 (18%)	1 (33%)	127 (39%)
F. Sentenced " " "	54 (24%)	15 (23%)	2 (17%)	2 (20%)	2 (18%)	1 (33%)	76 (23%)
G. Pre-trial " " "	120 (53%)	41 (63%)	10 (83%)	8 (80%)	9 (82%)	2 (67%)	190 (58%)
H. Awaiting Transfer " " "	52 (23%)	9 (14%)	0 ---	0 ---	0 ---	0 ---	61 (19%)
V. Total D.O.C. Factored Capacity	236	71	18	18	12	12	367

\*Based upon total average daily populations : Small 0-50; Medium 51-200; Large over 200.

The most common profile of an inmate in the Second Circuit is a male (93%), felon (61%) awaiting trial (58%) or transfer (19%). Only Leon and Jefferson counties had a significantly high percentage of misdemeanants in jail, 47 and 40 percent respectively.

The information in Table 2 shows that the number of full-time, certified correctional staff was extremely low (only 2) in the four small county jails. Jefferson and Liberty counties had no full-time correctional staff at all. In these counties the sheriffs' radio dispatch personnel performed inmate supervision duties in addition to their primary dispatch functions.

There are currently 45 full-time correctional officers manning the Leon County jail compared to a total of 18 full-time staff manning the other 5 county jails. Leon County has 5 more correctional staff than the minimum number required by the DOC. Conversely, the other five county jails are currently deficient by 24 in the minimum of 42 correctional staff deemed necessary by DOC standards. Three of the four small counties are seriously deficient in staff.

Only Leon and Gadsden County jails have any type of special program for inmates. Currently, none of the four small county jails even provide regular outside recreation (primarily because of correctional staff deficiencies).

TABLE 2

JAIL STAFFING AND PROGRAMS

	LEON	GADSDEN	WAKULLA	JEFFERSON	FRANKLIN	LIBERTY	2nd JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
VI. Number Full-time Certified Correctional Staff **	44	7	2	0	0	0	51
VII. Number Full-time Non-Certified Correctional Staff	1	5	1	0***	3	0***	10
VIII. Minimum Number of Certified Correctional Staff Required by D.O.C.	40	18	5	5	9	5	82
IX. Number of Correctional Staff Deficiencies	0	6	2	5	6	5	24
X. Special Inmate Programs?	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	
A. Work Release	X	X					
B. Road Crews							
C. Alternative Comm. Serv.	X						
D. Counseling Programs	X						
XI. Outside Recreation?	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	

\*\*Does not include administrative staff who may be certified as correctional officers.

\*\*\*Means sheriffs' dispatchers also serve as correctional staff in addition to their primary dispatching functions.



Table 3 reveals that, based upon the last DOC Inspection Reports, no county jail facility in the Second Judicial Circuit was found to be in compliance with the existing jail standards. Certain county jails were closer to compliance than others. However, the four small county jails were generally noted to be most seriously deficient based upon the existing rules.

The most obvious area of non-compliance among all the county jails except Leon, was inadequate staff. All counties were cited for at least some jail management deficiencies and some type of construction or renovation need - most commonly to improve lighting and/or ventilation. Only Leon County has any plans for renovation or construction.

An overview of the operational data in Leon County compared with the other five counties in the Circuit is presented in Table 4. The purpose of Table 4 is to document the total operational data and staff resources of these five counties in the region compared to Leon County.

B. Current Budget Data

Reiterating what was documented in the recent BCJA jail study report, staff found accurate jail budget information very scarce in most of the counties in the Second Circuit. However, by piecing together information from sheriffs and county budget personnel, staff was able to develop estimates of the current budgets for the six counties in the Circuit.



TABLE 3

COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS

	LEON	GADSDEN	WAKULLA	JEFFERSON	FRANKLIN	LIBERTY
XII. Current Jail Compliance with D.O.C. Standards?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Area of Non-Compliance:						
A. Staffing		X	X	X	X	X
B. Construction//Renovation	X	X	X	X	X	X
C. Management	X	X	X	X	X	X
D. Overcrowding						
XIII. Plans for New Construction or Renovation?	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

TABLE 4  
COMPARISON OF JAIL OPERATIONAL DATA\*

	Leon County	Total for 5 Other Counties in Circuit
I. Average Age of Jail Facility	17 years	25 years
II. Total Average Daily Population	226	101
A. Males and Percent of Total	207 (92%)	98 (97%)
B. Females " "	19 (8%)	3 (3%)
C. Juveniles " "	6 (3%)	2 (2%)
D. Felons " "	120 (53%)	80 (79%)
E. Misdemeanants "	106 (47%)	21 (21%)
F. Sentenced " "	54 (24%)	22 (22%)
G. Pre-trial " "	120 (53%)	70 (69%)
H. Awaiting Transfer "	52 (23%)	9 (9%)
III. Total D.O.C. Factored Capacity	236	131
IV. Number Full-time Certified Correctional Staff **	44	9
V. Number Full-time Non-Certified Correctional Staff	1	9
VI. Minimum Number of Correctional Staff Required by D.O.C.	40	42
VII. Number of Correctional Staff Deficiencies	0	24

\*Please note, that in this Table and Table 6, aggregate data for five of the counties in the 2nd Circuit are presented for the purpose of illustrating the potential combined operational profiles and resources of a region.

\*\*Does not include administrative personnel who may be certified as correctional officers.

As seen in Table 5, the budgets for county jails in the Second Judicial Circuit range from \$30,767 to \$1.3 million with the total budget for the Circuit being just over \$1.9 million. The average daily cost per inmate in Leon County is \$15.75 compared to nearly double that figure in Wakulla (\$28.18), Franklin (\$32.17) and Liberty (\$28.09) Counties.

Table 6 contrasts Leon County with the other five counties in the Circuit. The total budget (\$620,918) of the five smaller counties represents less than 50% of the Leon County jail budget. However, it is interesting that based upon current budget estimates and average daily populations, the average daily cost per inmate in Leon County (\$15.75) is comparable to the total average of the other five counties (\$16.84).

C. Projected Budget Data

Based on an analysis of the current operational data and the standards set forth in the new jail rules, staff was able to project certain budget increases for each county. These increases represent only the minimal operational costs (predominantly personnel increases) the county will incur in order to bring their jails up to compliance with the jail standards. As noted earlier, these projected increases do not include costs associated with renovation of jail facilities.

TABLE 5

COUNTY JAIL BUDGET DATA

	LEON	GADSDEN	WAKULLA	JEFFERSON	FRANKLIN	LIBERTY	2nd JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
I. Current Estimated Jail Budget*	\$1,300,000	\$276,845	\$123,433	\$60,687	\$129,184	\$30,767	\$1,920,916
II. Current Average Cost Per Inmate Per Day	\$15.75	\$11.65	\$28.18	\$16.62	\$32.17	\$28.09	\$16.09
III. Projected Budget <u>Increase</u> ** to Meet D.O.C. Standards	-0-	\$122,884	\$24,000	\$61,500	\$85,120	\$63,000	\$356,504
IV. Percentage Increase Over Current Budget	---	44.3%	19.4%	101.0%	65.8%	104.8%	18.5%
V. Total <u>Projected</u> Jail Budget	\$1,300,000	\$399,729	\$147,433	\$122,187	\$214,304	\$93,767	\$2,277,420
VI. Projected Average Cost Per Inmate Per Day	\$15.75	\$16.84	\$33.66	\$33.47	\$53.37	\$85.63	\$19.08

\*Based upon budget information collected from sheriff, county clerk and staff analysis.

\*\*Based upon estimates given by sheriff and staff analysis.

Note: This figure only represents identifiable operational cost increases necessary to meet new D.O.C. Standards.  
It does NOT include any construction or renovation costs which most counties are likely to incur.



TABLE 6

## COMPARISON OF JAIL BUDGET DATA

	Leon County	Total for 5 Other Counties in Circuit
I. Current Estimated Jail Budget	\$1,300,000.00	\$620,916.00
II. Current Average Cost Per Inmate Per Day *	\$ 15.75	\$ 16.84
III. Projected Budget Increase to Meet D.O.C. Standards	0	\$356,504.00
IV. Percentage Increase Over Current Budget	—	57%
V. Total Projected Jail Budget	\$1,300,000.00	\$977,420.00
VI. Projected Average Cost Per Inmate Per Day	\$ 15.75	\$ 26.51

\* Based upon average daily total in Leon County of 226 and an average daily total in the other 5 counties of 101

The data presented in Table 5 shows that every county in the Circuit except Leon County, will incur expenses ranging from \$24,000 to \$122,884. Jefferson and Liberty Counties will have to more than double their current budget in order to make operational improvements necessary to comply with the existing jail standards.

When the average cost per inmate per day is calculated based on the total projected budget, it becomes obvious that the increase will be significant for the small counties. Jefferson County's average daily costs will more than double and Liberty County's will increase from \$28.09 to \$85.63 (304%).

Table 6 reveals that the aggregate budget increase for the five smaller counties would constitute a 57% increase over the current total budget and would raise the average daily cost per inmate from \$16.84 to \$26.51. This is more than \$10.00 over the average daily cost per inmate of \$15.75 in Leon County. Again, the intent of this table is to illustrate the aggregate financial resources of these five counties compared to Leon county.

IV. PERCEIVED COUNTY JAIL PROBLEMS

It should be obvious from the data presented in the preceding section that generally, small county jails are having, and apparently will continue to have, considerable difficulty operating in a cost effective manner. An important backdrop to the entire impact issue is that the DOC, as a result of the *Arias v. Wainwright* lawsuit, is required to stringently enforce the existing jail rules. This means that counties with sub-standard jails will not be allowed to maintain the status quo and will be forced, if necessary, through lawsuits initiated by the DOC, to bring deficient jails into compliance.

The fiscal impact of each county voluntarily bringing their jail into compliance with current standards, constitutes a monumental hurdle if not an impossibility for most small counties. The data shows that the average daily cost per inmate per day for small county jails is already excessive compared to larger facilities. Addressing the current operational deficiencies alone would drive

the average daily costs for small counties to an exorbitantly high level.

When sheriffs in the Second Judicial Circuit were asked what were the chances of their county appropriating the funds necessary to bring their jails up to minimum standards, a typical response was "slim to none - we simply don't have the money". In fact, most of the sheriffs stated that they were hard pressed to maintain their current budget levels. Each sheriff, whose jail facility is not in compliance with the standards, has explicitly informed his respective county government of the jail deficiencies that exist and the liabilities that could ensue therefrom.

The following represents a summary of some of the major problems and deficiencies that currently exist in counties within the Second Judicial Circuit:

- Antiquated and deteriorating physical plants in all counties.
- Insufficient bed space in Franklin, Gadsden and Leon Counties.
- Insufficient personnel in Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Liberty and Wakulla Counties.
- Inadequate numbers of trained staff in Gadsden, Jefferson, and Liberty Counties.
- Excessive operational costs per inmate day in Wakulla, Franklin and Liberty Counties.
- Inadequate program services in all counties.

The only certainty that exists when analyzing the current and projected status of small county jails in Florida, is that unless there is a concerted and conscientious effort to find appropriate alternatives to the county jail problems, major conflicts between the counties and the state are inevitable. Additionally, if the present trend continues, the sheriff's primary function (law enforcement) will become increasingly subservient to corrections functions as they compete for limited funds.

#### V. POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVES

The potential alternatives for addressing the perceived or potential problems of the county jails are, of course, largely dictated by political and financial considerations. However, based upon the problems identified in the Second Judicial Circuit and assuming these problems are generally reflective of other similar regions, a number of potential alternatives are suggested.

##### A. Each County Upgrade Their Facilities

This option would be the most expensive of all options presented. As noted in Table 5, the projected operational costs associated with each county bringing their jail into compliance with existing standards would result in substantial increases in the already excessive cost per inmate per day figures in most of the counties. The advantage of this option is that political considerations are primarily confined within each county.

B. Regional Mutual Aid Agreement

This alternative involves the disbursement of selected county jail inmates to available bed space throughout the region. It would require mutual agreements among all jails within a region. This option appears to be best suited for providing short-term relief to overcrowded jails or to accomodate inmates from a jail that is not operating (due to permanent closing or temporary closing for renovation, repairs, etc.). Exercising this option is obviously dependant upon the existence of available bed space.

The primary advantage of this alternative is that it would serve to increase the cost-effectiveness of receiving counties by maximizing their available bed space and increasing the inmate/staff ratio. The primary disadvantages are that jails would still have to meet DOC standards and that transportation and inmate tracking costs along with per diem charges would be substantial for the transferring county. This option can only be viewed as a short-term solution.

C. Regional Jail Concept

Perhaps the most viable and cost-effective option available to the counties is some form of a regional jail concept. A regional jail is defined as a facility which

provides jail services for two or more counties and is administered by agreement between the affected parties. The form, extent and physical plant necessary to structure the regional jail will be dictated by the service needs as well as the geographical, financial and political constraints inherent in each participating county.

The regional jail concept can take a multitude of forms. It could range from a regional facility for only sentenced inmates to a full use facility. It could serve from two counties to an entire judicial circuit. It could be built and administered solely by the counties or built and run by the state. In some instances, existing jail facilities could be utilized as regional jails.

The budget data presented in Table 5 shows that a large facility (e.g. Leon) with a high ratio of inmates to staff was much more cost effective than small facilities with low inmate/staff ratios. Furthermore, Table 6 shows that if the budgets and inmate populations of the five smaller jails were combined, the average daily costs would be much more comparable to that of Leon county.

Two issues which will have a significant impact on the regional jail concept are what type of transportation system would be needed to transport inmates, and the issue of "reasonable proximity". Based upon data

gathered in the Second Judicial Circuit, staff has developed estimates of what a transportation system might cost in a regional concept. These estimates range from \$297 per day to \$148 per day for the entire Circuit (depending upon whether one or two round trips per day are necessary). If each county were to contribute an equal share, the average per diem costs would range from \$49.50 to \$24.66 per county per day. (These estimates are operational costs only and do not include any capital outlays for purchase of transport vehicles.)

Staff was informed, in initial discussions with representatives of the Attorney General's Office, that the issue of "reasonable proximity" has not produced any substantial body of case law. However, generally speaking, they did not feel that the issue of reasonable proximity would present a major obstacle to the regional concept if steps were taken to insure reasonable inmate access to legal counsel. They further stated that the reasonable proximity issue would have to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, adequate transportation should serve to forestall any significant problems emanating from the reasonable proximity issue.

The following represents some of the general advantages and disadvantages associated with specific types of regional facilities.

• Regional Jail for Sentenced Inmates Only

Advantages

1. Would effectively segregate pretrial detainees from sentenced inmates.
2. Could centralize and offer a wide range of sentence and treatment alternatives.
3. Would not require an elaborate transportation system.

Disadvantages

1. Would not displace a significant number of inmates.
2. In the absence of some other regional arrangement for pretrial inmates, individual counties would still have to maintain their facilities to house pretrial detainees.
3. Would remove a certain number of sentenced inmates from their communities.
4. Would likely require the creation of a new facility.
5. Would probably not be cost effective for most participating counties.

• Regional Jail for Pretrial Detainees Only

Advantages

1. Would effectively segregate pretrial detainees from sentenced inmates.
2. Could centralize and offer a wide range of pretrial alternatives and programs.



#### Disadvantages

1. Would require an elaborate transportation and inmate tracking system.
2. In the absence of some other regional arrangement for sentenced prisoners, each county would still have to maintain a facility for their sentenced inmates.
3. Would remove a significant number of pretrial detainees from their home community.
4. Would probably not be cost effective for most participating counties.

#### ● "Full Use" Regional Jail

This option entails the utilization of a regional concept for the purpose of handling both pretrial and sentenced inmates. This option could be implemented by using one facility or a combination of facilities as described in the two preceeding options.

#### Advantages

1. Allows for much greater flexibility in dealing with the total inmate population of a region.
2. Might allow one or more of the smaller jail facilities in a region to close its jail to full time inmates and only maintain a short-term lock-up capability (This is contingent upon formal understandings or agreements to make standards relating to short term lock-ups less strigent).

3. Would provide solutions to the overcrowding problems faced by larger counties in the region.
4. Could centralize and offer a wide range of pretrial, sentence and treatment alternatives and programs.
5. Would likely be more cost effective due to a high inmate/staff ratio and centralized operation.

#### Disadvantages

1. Would require an extensive transportation and inmate tracking system for pretrial inmates.  
(Available data suggests that, in most regions, the cost savings realized as a result of closing some of the existing county jails would more than offset the added transportation costs.)
2. Would remove a significant number of inmates from their communities.
3. Would make it more difficult for legal counsel, law enforcement, and prosecutors to have easy access to some inmates.

#### VI. CONCLUSIONS

There are a number of conclusions which can be drawn from the data gathered during this research effort. The following represents a summary of some of these conclusions:

- ④ Most county jails, and in particular small county jails, do not appear to be operating in a cost effective manner under the existing county jail standards.

- The most serious problems small counties are facing are inadequate staff, deteriorating facilities and insufficient funds to properly operate the jails.
- The most serious problem facing larger jails appears to be jail overcrowding.
- The most cost effective jails are those with high ratios of inmates to staff and those with inmate populations at or near capacity.
- Most small jails have very low inmate/staff ratios and do not operate near their maximum inmate capacity. Thus, most small jails are not cost effective.
- Most of the small county jails are located in northern Florida or the Panhandle.
- The sheriffs of the Second Judicial Circuit perceived the current and future problems associated with bringing their jails into compliance with existing standards to be quite serious and burdensome.
- All sheriffs staff talked to expressed a strong willingness and desire to explore alternative solutions to their jail problems.
- Among the general alternatives identified in this report, the jail regionalization concept appears to hold the greatest potential for alleviating the problems confronting county jails.
- Even with a regional jail concept, all counties will at least have to maintain a short term local lock-up capability.

- Regionalization will only be cost effective if short term county lock-ups are exempted from many of the current jail standards.
- Unless some alternatives are explored and implemented, it appears that many counties-particularly small counties, are headed for inevitable and significant legal conflicts with the State.
- Further research, evaluation and planning is needed to answer many of the remaining questions surrounding the county jail issue and to explore the feasibility of the various options available to address the identified problems. Specific areas needing further study include:
  - Identifying areas of the state which are experiencing significant problems with their county jail operation.
  - Exploring the "reasonable proximity" issue which includes reasonable inmate access to legal counsel, family and visitors.
  - Determining the degree to which local lock-ups must comply with existing jail standards.
  - Exploring the pros and cons of the various policy decisions relating to county jails such as the increased utilization of pretrial release alternatives and the incarceration of misdemeanants, etc.
  - Identifying specific cost variables associated with the regionalization concept.

**END**